United Nations E/AC.51/2009/3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 April 2009

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-ninth session
Substantive session
8 June-2 July 2009
Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-sixth session on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-sixth session in 2006 to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on its evaluations. This triennial review determines whether or not recommendations from the in-depth evaluation of political affairs (E/AC.51/2006/4), which focused on subprogramme 1, have been implemented. The Committee endorsed all 10 recommendations contained in the report.

OIOS finds that 4 of the 10 OIOS recommendations have been implemented. The conflict-prevention strategy of the Department of Political Affairs is outlined in the Secretary-General's 2006 progress report (A/60/891), although the report has not yet received specific endorsement by the General Assembly. The creation of 49 new posts, approved by the Assembly in its resolution 63/261 in 2008 as part of the Department's strengthening exercise, should increase the capacity of the Department to implement its conflict-prevention strategy. OIOS notes that the Department has

* E/AC.51/2009/1.

09-29931 (E) 270409

Please recycle

sufficiently clarified its role as focal point for conflict prevention and how the regional divisions are to support that role, outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates related to the proposed programme budget and the draft Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of the Department. The Department has undergone a limited change management process, including the development of a human resource strategy and the restructuring of its two mega-divisions — the Asia and the Pacific Division and the Americas and Europe Division — into two separate divisions each. In addition, the Department has developed a protocol for information collection and a framework for conflict analysis.

While OIOS recognizes progress made towards strengthening inter-agency communications, in particular through the work of its Framework Team, the mediation focal point system, and the integrated task forces at the country level, it urges the Department of Political Affairs to conduct a needs assessment of its partnerships and develop a formal concept for collaboration with its external partners.

The Department has increased its cooperation with the African Union, in particular through a series of desk-to-desk dialogues, as well as with the European Union, yet such progress has not been extended to its relations with other regional organizations within the framework of the agreed-upon modalities for cooperation. OIOS also notes that the Department does not have a knowledge management strategy, although it has developed a draft evaluation policy, which was approved by its management in 2009. OIOS encourages the Department to conduct an external evaluation of its trust funds.

Most regional divisions have not incorporated gender-mainstreaming goals into their workplans or demonstrated that they have designated gender focal points. Finally, OIOS noted that, at the level of most of the divisions, established management plans were not linked to the broader goals of the Department or to the individual workplans of staff.

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-sixth session in 2006, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs (E/AC.51/2006/4), which focused on subprogramme 1, and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (E/AC.51/2006/4/Add.1). The Committee endorsed all 10 recommendations contained in the report (A/61/16, para. 387).

2. The present report is issued pursuant to the triennial review of those recommendations, and examines the current status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the report. The objective of this triennial review is to report on the extent of implementation of the recommendations made on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs. The review does not include an assessment of the outcomes or impact of implementing the recommendations.

3. The methodology for the triennial review includes (a) a review and analysis of biennial progress reports on the status of recommendations that are monitored through the OIOS Issue Track database; (b) an analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from the Department of Political Affairs; (c) interviews with programme managers, desk officers and staff in the Department; and (d) a survey of regional organizations. A draft of the report was made available to the Department for review, and the comments received have been incorporated in the report.

II. Findings

4. Overall, OIOS finds that four of the recommendations have been implemented and six are in progress (see table 2 for a summary of the implementation status of each of the recommendations and remaining actions to be taken).

Recommendation 1: The Department of Political Affairs and the regional divisions should, as a matter of priority, take the initiative in working with relevant United Nations partners to develop and propose a system-wide strategy to better address intra-State and transnational conflicts.

The Department of Political Affairs commented that development of such a strategy would involve the United Nations system as a whole and, as such, it should be taken together with recommendation 3 below.

5. OIOS notes that the Department has made significant progress towards the implementation of this recommendation in the past three years. Previously, the Department had noted that the implementation of such a strategy would depend on strengthened regional divisions, including focal points for conflict prevention and mediation. In his 2007 report on revised estimates relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, section 3, Political affairs, section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, and section 35, Staff assessment, related to the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs (A/62/521 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General requested additional resources to support the cooperation of the Department with other actors in the United Nations system. In its resolution 63/261, the General Assembly approved the creation of 49 new posts in the Department,

including 27 in the regional divisions. OIOS notes that those posts will be filled by end of 2009, and trusts that this will significantly strengthen the capacity of the Department in its conflict-prevention work.

6. In 2006, the Department of Political Affairs established the Mediation Support Unit as a centre of expertise, best practice and knowledge management on mediation-related activities, providing both institutional and operational support to mediators and their teams. OIOS notes that the Department now has two focal point systems on mediation. The first is a Department-wide system that has been operational since 2006; meetings are held every two weeks to plan and coordinate mechanisms to support ongoing peace operations and to develop appropriate mediation-support policy and guidance. The second is a United Nations-wide focal point system that was launched in January 2009; meetings are held monthly to provide mediation support to the wider United Nations system in order to create synergy and strengthen its collective capacity in identifying early entry points for preventive diplomacy and action.

7. OIOS notes that the Department also currently chairs (jointly with the World Food Programme) the Inter-agency Framework for Coordination on preventive action (Framework Team), which provides coordinated inter-agency support to Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams.[1] Within the context of the Framework Team, peace and development advisers assist national counterparts in developing and implementing their own conflict-prevention initiatives.

8. OIOS notes that the Secretary-General outlined the Department's conflict-prevention strategy in 2006 in his progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). The report includes recommendations for addressing systemic sources of tension and strengthening global norms and institutions for peace, and emphasizes the importance of all relevant players acting in concert. The report, however, has not yet received specific endorsement from the General Assembly.

9. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented. However, OIOS notes that the conflict-prevention strategy presented in the progress report is still pending approval by the General Assembly.

[1] The Framework Team has 21 members: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Democracy Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.

Recommendation 2: In consultation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations system forums and partners, the Department of Political Affairs should seek clarification of its role and vision as the focal point for conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding, and how the regional divisions are to support that role.

The Department of Political Affairs acknowledged that clarification of its focal point role was necessary, but stated that that would be a time-consuming and sensitive process.

10. The Department has made significant progress in clarifying its role as the focal point for conflict prevention over the past three years. In his 2007 report, the Secretary-General stated the role he expects the Department to play, noting that "the Department of Political Affairs is the support structure and the operational arm for the good offices and preventive capabilities of the Secretary-General" (A/62/521 and Corr.1, para. 8).

11. OIOS also notes that more efforts are under way to further clarify the role of the Department of Political Affairs in relation to United Nations agencies. In his draft bulletin on the organization of the Department of Political Affairs, the Secretary-General defines the Department as the lead unit of the United Nations for political analysis, mediation and political guidance as they relate to the Organization's efforts towards preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding. The functions of the regional divisions with regard to conflict prevention are also clearly spelled out and include advising the Secretary-General in giving overall political direction to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts and to providing guidance to United Nations funds, programmes and agencies.

12. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented. OIOS notes that the Secretary-General's bulletin on the role of the Department of Political Affairs and the functions of its regional divisions in relation to other departments of the Secretariat and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes is still at the drafting stage, and trusts that its finalization will not be delayed.

Recommendation 3: The regional divisions should strengthen institutional mechanisms for inter-agency communications and for the design, promotion, mobilization and monitoring of system-wide support in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. These mechanisms should include: (a) an established protocol for inter-agency communications and information exchange on conflict-related reports and matters; (b) a well-defined concept for collaboration with the partner institutions and a needs assessment of each partnership (including regional commissions); and (c) where appropriate, guidelines for collaboration to clarify respective interests, roles and obligations of the collaborating institutions. With regard to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in order to strengthen complementarities and avoid duplication, a working group should be established to explore alternatives for formal institutional arrangements that would meet the needs of both departments.

The Department of Political Affairs commented that although it readily acknowledged the need to address the division of labour with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, it felt strongly that that could not be achieved through the format of a working group as proposed in the present report.

13. OIOS notes that while the recommended formal mechanisms have not been established fully, DPA has made some significant progress in strengthening its institutional mechanisms for inter-agency communications. Through the Framework Team Expert Reference Group, the Department closely collaborates with the regional bureaux of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop country-specific conflict-prevention strategies. As part of this collaboration, the Department developed, jointly with the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, a programme on building national capacities for conflict prevention.

14. The Department of Political Affairs has also increased its collaboration with other United Nations agencies in the field through the policy of integrated missions in conflict and post-conflict situations where the United Nations has a country team. Guidelines for an integrated mission planning process were issued and endorsed by the Secretary-General in June 2006, following which a working group was established to operationalize them. The working group has developed two papers: (a) the United Nations strategic assessment (draft, 2009), outlining the process for conducting interdepartmental and inter-agency strategic assessments of a political crisis, conflict or post-conflict situation; and (b) integrated planning for United Nations field presences (draft, 2009), focusing on joint mechanisms and planning processes needed at United Nations Headquarters for the planning of field missions that operate alongside a country team. The Department of Political Affairs is leading the first process, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations the second. Both drafts are expected to be approved by the second quarter of 2009.

15. OIOS notes, however, that there have been no specific concepts or guidelines established for the collaboration of the Department of Political Affairs with partner institutions outside the United Nations system.

16. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider the recommendation implemented, the Department should conduct a needs assessment of its partnerships and establish a well-defined concept for collaboration with its partners outside the United Nations system.

Recommendation 4: The regional divisions should seek to implement fully all the agreed-upon modalities for cooperation with the regional organizations.

17. The 13 modalities for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of conflict prevention were adopted at the third high-level meeting between the Secretary-General and heads of regional and other intergovernmental organizations, held in New York on 28 and 29 July 1998 (see table 1).

18. OIOS takes note of specific issues raised by staff of the Department of Political Affairs concerning the implementation of the modalities. While in this review OIOS is considering only the activities of the Department's regional divisions in cooperation with regional organizations, it recognizes that the modalities were developed in reference to the United Nations system as a whole.[2] OIOS also recognizes that regional organizations differ from each other in terms of

[2] This review addresses actions referred to in the modalities to be taken between the United Nations and regional organizations, not those to be taken among the regional organizations themselves.

their resources and capacity and therefore call for varying forms of cooperation with the United Nations.

19. While noting that 4 of the 13 modalities were considered already implemented at the time of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/2006/4), OIOS finds that of the other 9 modalities, 6 have been implemented and 1 is in progress, and that no action has been taken on 2.

20. The Department of Political Affairs established a liaison office with the African Union as part of the 10-year capacity-building programme, and informal discussions with other regional organizations have been held to explore ways to establish similar arrangements.[3] OIOS therefore finds that modality 3 is in progress.

21. Department focal points for regional organizations regularly exchange and maintain names and contact details of their counterparts in the regional organizations, as called for in modality 4. OIOS also notes that the Department has undertaken training programmes with the United Nations System Staff College and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research involving regional organizations, and conducted several training sessions with the African Union in 2007 and 2008, with another planned for 2009. OIOS therefore considers modality 6 implemented. OIOS also considers modalities 8 and 9 implemented through the work of the Framework Team on common assessments of conflict situations and Department support of the communities of practice in conflict prevention. Further, as required by modality 10, the Department maintains an online database of peace agreements and experiences in peacemaking (www.un.org/peacemaker). OIOS also notes that the Department has established the post of Resource Mobilization Specialist, in fulfilment of modality 12. As modalities 1, 2, 5 and 7 were deemed implemented at the time of the in-depth evaluation, the total number of implemented modalities now stands at 10.

22. The Department of Political Affairs did not provide relevant information on modalities 11 and 13, and OIOS therefore concludes that no action was taken on them. OIOS commends the Department's strong cooperation with the African Union and the European Union, in particular with regard to modalities 3, 5, 6 and 8, but notes that progress should be extended to other regional organizations. OIOS also notes that several regional organizations that responded to the OIOS survey expressed dissatisfaction with the level of the Department's implementation of the modalities, which they rated as "fair", "poor" or "very poor".[4] In particular, visits by Department staff and senior officials, the joint training of staff, the use of a conflict-prevention database and the Department's links with civil society were rated poorly. Respondents also said that the Department does not have a cooperation strategy with regional organizations, that it is unresponsive to their proposals for interaction and that cooperation takes place on an ad hoc basis. The full list of the 13 modalities and their current status of implementation is shown in table 1.

[3] See, for example, the declaration entitled "Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the 10-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union" (A/61/630, annex).

[4] OIOS sent the survey to 18 regional organizations and received responses from 5, representing a 28 per cent response rate. While that rate is statistically not significant and was therefore not used as a basis for analysis, the responses were nonetheless taken into account.

Table 1
The 13 modalities for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations

Modality	*Status of implementation*
Modality 1: Better coordination and consultation among regional organizations, and between regional organizations and the United Nations, both at the headquarters level and in the field	Implemented by the time of in-depth evaluation
Modality 2: Better flows of information through systematic mechanisms among regional organizations, and between regional organizations and the United Nations	Implemented by the time of in-depth evaluation
Modality 3: Exchange of liaison officers among regional organizations, and between regional organizations and the United Nations	In progress
Modality 4: Exchange of lists of staff officers by country/region and functional areas	Implemented
Modality 5: Visits of staff at working level between the different headquarters	Implemented by the time of in-depth evaluation
Modality 6: Joint training of staff in the field of early warning and preventive action[a]	Implemented
Modality 7: Arranging joint expert meetings on certain specific areas of early warning and prevention	Implemented by the time of in-depth evaluation
Modality 8: Establish repositories of best practices and lessons learned in the area of early warning and prevention	Implemented
Modality 9: Development of common indicators for early warning	Implemented
Modality 10: Establishment of a database of the conflict-prevention capabilities of the United Nations and regional organizations	Implemented
Modality 11: Build specific links to civil society (including the media and professional groups) to increase awareness of the value of prevention	No action taken
Modality 12: Mobilize effective resources for early warning and preventive activities	Implemented

Modality	*Status of implementation*
Modality 13: Undertake follow-up meetings at the working level to develop the above and other specific modalities for early warning/prevention, on a case-by-case basis. The first such meetings could be convened by the United Nations before the end of the year (2006)	No action taken

[a] OIOS recognizes that the emphasis on early warning in modalities 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13 is a result of the fact that the modalities were being developed in 1998 when the Department of Political Affairs was initiating an extensive training programme on early warning and preventive measures with the United Nations System Staff College. The programme ran from 1998 until 2006, and more than 1,600 United Nations staff members were trained.

23. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider this recommendation implemented, the Department of Political Affairs should demonstrate that the remaining three modalities have been implemented.

> **Recommendation 5: The regional divisions should undergo an intensive, time-bound and results-oriented change management process. This should include reviews of management, organization structure, human resources and work processes and, if necessary, reprofiling of the competency needs of the divisions to better meet their mandates. The review of organization structure should consider the restructuring of the two mega-divisions — the Asia and the Pacific Division and the Americas and Europe Division — to better support substantive and management prerogatives. The work of the Policy Planning Unit should be reviewed with the goal of more closely linking it to the priorities and needs of the regional divisions. All the reviews should consider gender issues as well. The process should be driven by mandate, be facilitated by external experts in change management, have a dedicated internal change management capacity, and be required to propose restructured, renewed and adequately resourced regional divisions.**

24. In its resolution 63/261, the General Assembly approved the restructuring of the two mega-divisions of Asia and the Pacific and the Americas and Europe, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/521 and Corr.1). The Asia and the Pacific Division was separated into (a) the Middle East and West Asia Division and (b) the Asia and Pacific Division. Within the Asia and Pacific Division, two sections were created: Pacific I (Central, South and North-east Asia) and Pacific II (South-east Asia and Pacific). The Americas and Europe Division was separated into (a) the Americas and (b) Europe. It was decided to divide the Americas Division into the following sections: North America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America. The OIOS proposal to restructure the two divisions was thus implemented. The Department's proposal to reorganize its Policy Planning Unit and Mediation Support Unit into a combined policy, partnerships and mediation support division, however, was not approved by the General Assembly, which instead approved seven additional posts for the Mediation Support Unit.

25. In the proposed budget for the biennium 2008-2009, the Department proposed the establishment of a small change-management office. The proposal was rejected by the Controller, although OIOS notes that the function has now been included

under the Office of the Under-Secretary-General. OIOS also notes that the Department is currently developing a human resources strategy and produced a human resources action plan for the sixth cycle (2009) in line with the senior management compacts with the Secretary-General. The Department also conducted a gap-analysis exercise in January 2009 to assess its current skills set within its sections and regional divisions. In addition, it carried out a supply analysis, indicating workforce profile, including the distribution of staff by occupational group, category, geographical representation and gender. On the basis of those two analyses, the Department will make projections of staff movements due to retirement and other factors to inform its human resources strategy. OIOS concurs with that structured approach to developing a human resources strategy.

26. Although more could have been done in the change management process, OIOS recognizes the initiatives made by the Department and considers this recommendation implemented.

Recommendation 6: An independent, external evaluation should be conducted of both the Trust Fund for Preventive Action and the Trust Fund for Special Political Missions and Other Activities, to assess their effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact, as well as their management and operations.

27. The Department of Political Affairs has not conducted an independent, external evaluation of the Trust Fund for Preventive Action and the Trust Fund for Special Political Missions and Other Activities. OIOS notes, however, that the Department has developed a template for project reporting so that all trust fund reporting can be done in a standard format, and that annual substantive reports are required for all trust funds. The Department also plans to develop a database for the administration of its trust funds. OIOS considers these to be useful monitoring tools that should provide credible information for evaluation, but they cannot be a substitute for an independent external evaluation. Department staff have indicated to OIOS that, although they would like to carry out such an evaluation, they still lack the necessary resources to do so.

28. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. While noting that the two Trust Funds continue to be in existence, and have been further replenished with up to $25 million, in order for OIOS to consider this recommendation implemented, the Department should conduct an independent external evaluation of the Trust Funds.

Recommendation 7: A protocol for information collection and a framework for conflict analysis should be established, in consultation with end-users and experts in the field, as well as with regional organizations to ensure relevance to local and regional concerns. The resulting protocol and framework for analysis should be made part of an orientation toolkit for desk officers, made available on the Intranet, and they should also be periodically reviewed and improved.

29. OIOS notes that a template framework for political analysis was developed in 2006. The template was developed through a consultative process involving staff of the regional divisions, field officers and members of the Framework Team. OIOS notes in particular the role of the Framework Team in providing a link between the Department and other United Nations agencies, as well as with staff in the field.

OIOS reviewed the template and notes that it provides guidance in three broad areas: (a) strategic analysis to provide policy alternatives in conflict or potential conflicts; (b) political analysis of situations in which armed conflict is neither prevalent nor likely; and (c) assessment of electoral processes. Some Department desk officers mentioned that the template provided a useful tool, further noting that its utility should not, however, be regarded in isolation of the formal and informal networks that exist between Headquarters and field staff.

30. Since 2007, the framework for political analysis has been distributed to all political staff of the Department and is included in the manual for new staff. It will be posted on the pilot Intranet website of the Department when it is launched in June 2009. Section B of the induction manual, "Carrying out your responsibilities", includes guidelines on (a) drafting, (b) how to access a template, (c) the framework for political analysis and (d) work during the general debate of the General Assembly. The Department is currently planning to undertake induction training for new staff members every six months.

31. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

Recommendation 8: The regional divisions should develop a knowledge management strategy for developing, organizing, storing, sharing and using their knowledge assets. In addition, the Department of Political Affairs should establish an evaluation policy to support institutional knowledge and best practices development.

32. The Policy Planning Unit intends to undertake a needs assessment survey on knowledge management in the second quarter of 2009. OIOS reviewed the draft survey questionnaire, which will be administered online to all Department staff, and noted that its objectives are (a) to assess the need for the development, dissemination and use of knowledge management tools; (b) to assess the specific needs of different groups (e.g., Headquarters, field, special political missions, electoral assistance); and (c) to test initial assumptions in the process of planning for those tools.

33. OIOS also reviewed the 2009-2010 business plan of the Mediation Support Unit and notes that one of the five goals is "mediation approaches and knowledge developed, captured, maintained and disseminated". The plan articulates that goal as consolidating the institutional knowledge and memory of the United Nations on mediation and its support activities in a manner that will enable the Organization to respond effectively and consistently on the basis of lessons learned and best practices. In line with that goal, OIOS notes that the Department has undertaken an After Action Review on Department support to the African Union mediation effort in Kenya. In addition, it has established a standby team of mediation experts, which has been in operation since March 2008 and focuses on delivering expert technical advice to United Nations peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy efforts, as well as playing a strategic role in developing policies, guidelines, procedures, standards and materials for training and lessons learned.

34. The Mediation Support Unit has also developed a programme concept on debriefing and lessons learned assignment for senior officials with the objective of enabling the Department to benefit from the experience of senior officials and to project lessons learned on a systematic basis.

35. In October 2006, the Mediation Support Unit also launched the Peacemaker website (www.un.org/peacemaker), an online mediation support tool for international peacemaking professionals, which contains a databank of all modern peace agreements. The website is intended to meet the information and knowledge requirements of peacemakers, with content including peace agreements, peace agreement summaries and selected literature on various substantive peacemaking issues, as well as an extensive legal library providing access to the legal framework that guides United Nations efforts in peacemaking and links to research centres and other useful resources. The site also offers access to peacemaking knowledge by providing lessons, case briefs, operational guidance notes, knowledge essays and comments on peace agreements and the management of peace processes. OIOS also notes the close collaboration between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It also notes, in particular, that the department is developing a field mission Intranet in coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which will be based on the current Intranet site of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.[5] Staff of the Department of Political Affairs participated in a peacekeeping Intranet and portal planning workshop held by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in Brindisi, Italy, from 28 to 30 October 2008, following which the Department of Political Affairs has been working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to customize its current Intranet for Department missions.

36. OIOS also notes that the Department of Political Affairs has developed an evaluation and monitoring policy. The draft policy was approved by Department management in February 2009. The policy makes specific reference to recommendation 5 of a 2007 OIOS report,[6] which mandates the Department to develop an explicit policy statement on evaluation. OIOS reviewed the evaluation and monitoring policy, and is satisfied that it sufficiently addresses the part of its recommendation on establishing an evaluation policy.

37. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider the recommendation implemented, the Department should demonstrate that it has a knowledge management strategy. OIOS recommends that the Department consider the knowledge management strategy of the new working group on knowledge management once it has been finalized and subsequently work with the group, under the leadership of the Office of Information and Communications Technology, in developing a strategy for the Department. *The Department noted that it has a representative from the Office of the Under-Secretary-General on the task force with a view to ensuring minimal overlap and duplication between Department and Secretariat-wide efforts.*

[5] http://intranet.dpko.un.org/dpko/pages/home.aspx.

[6] "Assessment of evaluation capacities and needs in the United Nations Secretariat", OIOS report No. IED-2006-006 (24 August 2007).

Recommendation 9: The regional divisions should establish division-level gender mainstreaming goals and action plans; these should be in support of the Department-level gender mainstreaming action plan and have direct links to management and individual performance plans (e-PAS). The regional divisions should also designate gender focal points for each division, to support the work of the Department's gender focal point.

38. The Department set out its strategic goals for gender mainstreaming in its 2006 policy statement on gender equality. OIOS notes that the Department's strategic-level goals provide for the appointment of gender advisers and focal points at Department headquarters as well as in all its field missions. OIOS further notes that, while the strategic goals on gender mainstreaming contain an all-inclusive statement that staff must ensure that gender dimensions are fully taken into account and reflected in all areas of work, there are no specific division-level goals to show how the regional divisions translate and implement that goal. One staff member observed that while the Department-level gender policy is very clear, it remains for regional divisions to include gender dimensions in their own divisional workplans.

39. Overall, there has been an increase in efforts to mainstream gender in the Department. Three gender mainstreaming workshops were conducted at Department headquarters in June and July 2008. The Department informed OIOS that in April 2008, it had conducted three workshops, at the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations Office for West Africa, on how to integrate Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) into conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. The workshops were attended by representatives of regional and non-governmental organizations and staff of the respective United Nations country teams.

40. The Department action plan on implementing resolution 1325 (2000) calls on all regional divisions to include the priorities identified in the resolution in the workplans of each division and to appoint a full-time gender adviser for the Department and a network of focal points across divisions. Only two regional divisions — Europe and Africa II — demonstrated that resolution 1325 (2000) had been incorporated into their workplans. OIOS was informed that all regional divisions had a gender focal point, but — after repeated requests — the Department provided the names of focal points for only three of the regional divisions: Asia and the Pacific, Africa I and Africa II.

41. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider this recommendation implemented, the regional divisions should develop divisional-level gender-mainstreaming goals in their workplans. Regional divisions should also demonstrate that they have established divisional gender focal points.

Recommendation 10: The regional divisions should strengthen their results-based management system. A clear relationship should be established between the e-PAS, the division management plans and the subprogramme logical framework. In consultation with their primary "clients", the divisions should further refine and develop performance indicators that are meaningful for internal management purposes.

42. OIOS reviewed the Department's biennial programme plan for the period 2006-2007 and that for 2008-2009.[7] OIOS noted that the indicator of achievement for 2006-2007, increased percentage of conflict situations addressed through peaceful means, was the same as that used in the medium-term plan for the period 2004-2005.[8] The Department had difficulty in providing precise numbers of conflict situations addressed. The indicator was changed in the programme plan for the period 2008-2009 to read: "100 per cent response to all requests of Member States and regional organizations for preventive action". For 2010-2011, a further indicator was added: "Number of good offices efforts to address conflict situations where the United Nations was asked to assist".[9]

43. In 2009, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs signed a senior manager's compact with the Secretary-General, which articulates specific performance measures. The compact offers a solid basis for regional divisions to establish clear linkages between the subprogramme logical framework, the divisional management plan and individual performance plans. However, only three regional divisions — Europe, the Americas and Africa II — provided evidence of a workplan to OIOS, and of those, only the Europe and Africa II divisions had linked their objectives to the compact and to individual work assessments. OIOS believes that there is scope for regional divisions to strengthen their results-based management system by developing divisional management plans that capture the broader Department-level goals in the compact, while also providing guidance and a basis for individual performance assessment.

44. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider the recommendation implemented, regional divisions should develop divisional management plans that have an upward link with the compact signed by the Under-Secretary-General and a downward link with individual workplans.

Table 2
Summary of recommendations

Recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination	*Status of implementation*	*Necessary actions for implementation*
Recommendation 1: Develop and propose a system-wide strategy to address intra-State and transnational conflicts	Implemented	

[7] A/59/6/Rev.1 and Corr.1, programme 2, subprogramme 1, and A/61/6/Rev.1, programme 2, subprogramme 1.

[8] A/57/6/Rev.1, programme 1, subprogramme 1.

[9] A/63/6/Rev.1, programme 2, subprogramme 1.

Recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination	*Status of implementation*	*Necessary actions for implementation*
Recommendation 2: Clarify role and vision of the Department of Political Affairs as the focal point for conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding	Implemented	
Recommendation 3: Strengthen institutional mechanisms for inter-agency communications and for the design, mobilization and monitoring of system-wide support in conflict prevention and peacebuilding	In progress	• Conduct a needs assessment of Department of Political Affairs partnerships • Establish a well-defined concept for collaboration with partners outside the United Nations system
Recommendation 4: Implement fully all agreed-upon modalities for cooperation with the regional organizations.	In progress	• Demonstrate that the remaining 3 of the 13 modalities have been implemented
Recommendation 5: Undergo an intensive, time-bound and results-oriented change-management process	Implemented	
Recommendation 6: Conduct an independent, external evaluation of the Trust Fund for Preventative Action and the Trust Fund for Special Political Missions and Other Activities	In progress	• Conduct an independent external evaluation of the Trust Funds
Recommendation 7: Establish a protocol for information collection and a framework for conflict analysis	Implemented	
Recommendation 8: Develop a knowledge management strategy for developing, organizing, storing, sharing and using knowledge assets; and establish an evaluation policy to support institutional knowledge and best practices development	In progress	• Demonstrate that the Department has a knowledge management strategy • Consider the knowledge management strategy of the new working group on knowledge management once it has been finalized, and subsequently work with that group, under the leadership of the Office of Information and Communications Technology, in developing a strategy for the Department
Recommendation 9: Establish division-level gender-mainstreaming goals and action plans	In progress	• Develop division-level gender-mainstreaming goals • Demonstrate that the regional divisions have established divisional gender focal points

Recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination	*Status of implementation*	*Necessary actions for implementation*
Recommendation 10: Strengthen the regional divisions' results-based management system	In progress	• Develop divisional management plans that have an upward link with the compact signed by the Under-Secretary-General and a downward link with individual workplans

III. Conclusion

45. Although still to be endorsed by the General Assembly, the conflict-prevention strategy outlined in the progress report of the Secretary-General (A/60/891) marks a significant milestone towards developing a clear role and vision for the Department of Political Affairs. Furthermore, the Department's recent initiative to establish a United Nations-wide mediation focal point system and its activities in the context of the Framework Team, as well as its efforts to strengthen collaboration with other United Nations agencies in the field, also demonstrate increased clarity on the part of the Department regarding its role as focal point for mediation and conflict prevention within the United Nations system. However, there is a need for the Department to further strengthen its collaboration with partners outside the United Nations system, in particular civil society organizations.

(*Signed*) Inga-Britt **Ahlenius**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

9 April 2009